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The Reports and Photographs of Albert English

Overlooked sources of Papua New Guinea History and Anthropology

By Jan Hasselberg

This article has come about in the wake of my work to find and identify Albert English's photographs. Most of his photographs have until recently been 'hidden' in collections under other names, so his role as an important early photographer in British New Guinea (BNG) has not been fully recognised. My research also unveiled English's significant role as a colonial agent in British New Guinea's first decades, which has, surprisingly, been bypassed by historians. I have thus here, before commenting on his photographs, first summarised his work as Government officer and planter during these early years. Seen together, English's work, which is well described in his reports, and his photographs give us unique insight into the colonial developments in BNG between 1890 and 1905. A comment on English's artefact collection is also included.

Figure 1 (above): *Keapara men in "Gaba" costume*. (Australian Museum AMS332/181)
Figure 2 (below): Albert English at Rigo Station. (detail) (Macleay Collection, Chau Chak Wing Museum, HP84.12.9)

Figure 3: *Village of VELERUPU, Macfarlane harbour,* 1890s. (National Library of PNG, A40)

It is something of a paradox that the career and writings of Albert English (1863-1945) has been largely overlooked by Papua New Guinea (PNG) historians, since he was the longest staying of all the pioneering expatriates and since he was a central agent in the formative years of the colony from 1884 to 1907: he served as a Government Agent for sixteen years; he took part in several major expeditions; and he established and ran the most important plantation in British New Guinea (BNG) [1]. English was furthermore known for his good relation to the local people. In what is written about history and anthropology from the early colonial decades in BNG, English's name appears only in occasional mentions and footnotes - a 'missing link' which I here wish to put in place.

My main sources for describing and discussing Albert English' role and activities, are the reports he contributed to the *Annual Reports of British New Guinea* (AR) over a 16-year period. I have only consulted a few of English's *Station Reports*, which sometimes give additional details to the AR's. Besides the reports, there are no letters, diaries, or other private sources, except for a small collection of his official correspondence which is held in a file at the National Library of Australia[2]. There are comments and mentions of English in other officer's reports which are important additions to English's own words. A short summary of English's life, written in 1961[3],

[1] The colony of British New Guinea was officially declared in 1884, first as a Protectorate', the year after A. English's arrival. The responsibility for administration of the colony was, after some controversy and delays, transferred to Australia in 1906, and the name was changed to the Territory of Papua. The new administration was not in place before April 1907, the year of English's retirement.

[2] *Papers of Albert Charles English, 1889-1939* [manuscript]; National Library of Australia: MS 385

[3] J.W. Collinson: 'Brief Synopsis of the Life of Albert Charles English', *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, Vol.6/3, 1961, p. 580-593

helpfully fill in some blanks, and there are a few mentions in books and articles by various writers. From the time after his retirement from Government work, we have only a few scattered references.[4]

Close to 250 photographs by English have been identified, spread on seven repositories (plus one privately held collection), most of them taken during his years as a colonial officer (details on these below). There are short captions to English's photographs in his albums which help us to identify and place them, and there are registration lists with similar captions in some archives. Importantly, there is a lantern slide manuscript written by English in 1904 - for slides which all concern local people and culture - which gives additional information to the many of his photographs.[5]

Albert English's New Guinea career

Albert Charles English arrived in British New Guinea in 1883, at the age of twenty, and stayed there till 1942, when he was ordered to leave because of the war.[6] He exemplifies the European colonialist in New Guinea perhaps better than anyone else. During his sixty years in BNG he collected animals and plants, he took part in several historic expeditions, he was a Government Agent for almost twenty years, he collected cultural objects, and he started a major plantation which he ran for more than fifty years. On some of his patrols he also washed for gold, and thus dressed in most of the hems of the archetypal New Guinea ex-patriates - the missionary cloak

Figure 4: Albert English with expedition carriers at Kalikodobu, 1900, by F.R. Barton (The Royal Anthropological Institute (the RAI) 400.21247)

[4] Of previous written references to Albert English, a biographical text in Welch (1998) is short but well summarised. Col. Kenneth Mackay, leader of the 1906 Royal Commission, wrote a few pages from his stay with English in *Across Papua* (1909), and Malinowski's fieldnotes from his stay in 1915 are referred to in M. Young: *Malinowski: Oddyssay of an Anthropologist 1884-1920* (2004). Some on English's later life is mentions by Collinson (1961). Strikingly, there is no entry on Albert English in *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* where many important PNG colonial agents, and some of minor importance, are portrayed.

[5] The lantern slide manuscript, which was written for a presentation in Sydney in January 1904, is part of *Papers of Nigel Oram*, (National Library of Australia, MS 9436).

[6] Albert English (1864-1945) was indeed English; he migrated to Australia in 1881, and onwards to New Guinea in 1883, a year before the official proclamation of the colony.

being the one missing. Rigo Station southeast of Port Moresby (see map, page 5), where English had settled and was stationed for sixteen years, became a model for other officers to follow, and it was also at Rigo where he had his plantation, Barodobo.

After some years of collecting birds and animals (he had an agreement with wealthy sponsors) English gradually became involved in government work. After the arrival of William MacGregor, Lieutenant Governor of the colony from 1888 to 1898, he was soon joining him on inspections along the coast. The first mention of English in MacGregor's reports is from November 1888 near East Cape, when the former had shown initiative in a difficult arresting situation, much to the Administrator's satisfaction (AR 1888-89, p.14). The next year English stepped in as substitute for the Government Agent at Rigo, the post which he took over permanently the following year and held till 1907. From 1890 to 1907 we thus have annual contributions from English in the *Annual Reports of British New Guinea*, more than from any other officer of the early decades. He also supplied details about his district, which were not given by other Agents and Magistrates.

1890 was also the year when he started his plantation, and developments of English's plantation at Rigo can be followed through his reports. It is not clear to what degree the plantation initially was a part of the official station, and how much it was his private project - it seems to have filled both functions.[7] He was the first in the colony to plant rubber and sisal, but copra was, as elsewhere in New Guinea, the main crop. His eager experimenting with different varieties of plants was followed both by officials and by other planters. As the plantation grew it became, however, a matter of conflicting interests, which was eventually one of the reasons why English left the Government service.

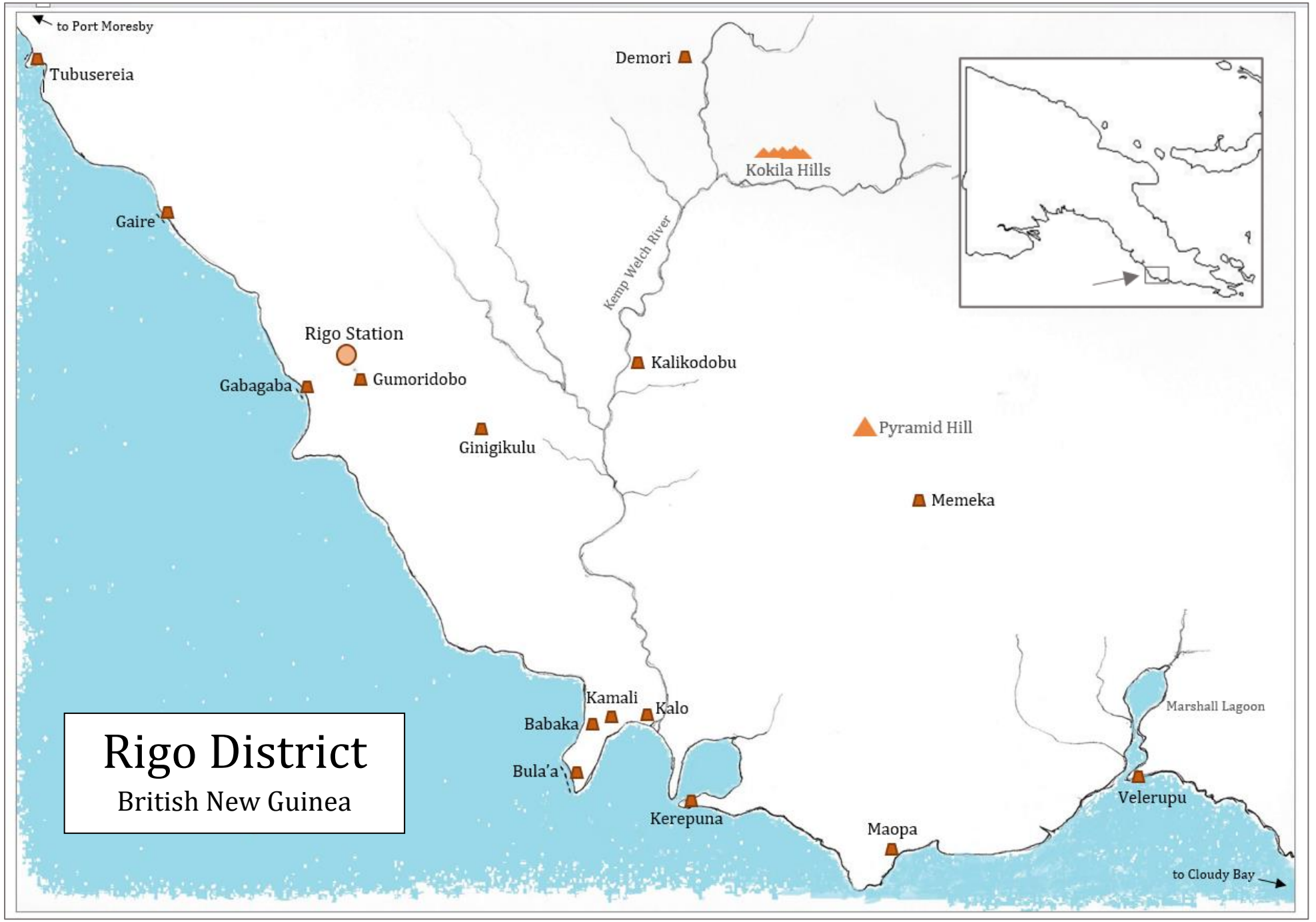
Rigo Government Station was located ten kilometers from the coast, at the western end of the district it was to serve and control. This included the Rigo Hills, the Southern Motu villages on the coast towards Port Moresby, the large and rugged inland area around the Kemp-Welch River and its tributaries, the Hood Peninsula, where Kalo was the main village, the Keapara or Aroma area (with Maopa village), and Marshall Lagoon with its stilt villages. He also patrolled Cheshunt Bay and Cloudy Bay farther to the east. Gabagaba village (formerly spelled Kapakapa, see Figure 5) on the coast below Rigo served as the station's wharf and was thus a place where English had close contacts. The hilly country just east of Rigo Station and around the Hood Peninsula had, for BNG, a large population, spread in numerous villages and hamlets.

English was most successful in establishing friendly contacts and constructive relations with local people of many groups and this gave him a special position among the administrators, and his house at Rigo became one of the few places outside Port Moresby and Samarai where many visitors stopped by or spent some time. The visitors included some of the most well-known ethnographers and anthropologists of the time: Lamberto Loria, Alfred Haddon, Charles Seligman and Bronislaw Malinowski.

While known for the respect and good relations he built with the natives, English certainly believed in the colonial project. Finding and making land available for planters, supporting gold diggers and other European treasure hunters, and making the colony safe for outsiders by stopping the fighting between local groups were major posts on his agenda. And he believed that by bringing peace, economic opportunities and Christianity to the local people they would also benefit from becoming subjects of the Queen. Adventurous 'discovering' of unknown tracts and their inhabitants was clearly also a motivating factor for his energetic and long-lasting activities.

Next page - Map 1: Rigo District, showing some of the places mentioned in the article.

[7] Mackay (1909, p. 32) wrote that English started the plantation on Governor MacGregor's suggestion.


to Port Moresby
Tubusereia
Demori
Kokila Hills
Gaire
Kemp Welch River
Rigo Station
Gumoridobo
Gabagaba
Kalikodobu
Ginigikulu
Pyramid Hill
Memeka
Kamali
Kalo
Babaka
Bula'a
Marshall Lagoon
Velerupu
Kerepuna
Maopa
to Cloudy Bay
Rigo District
British New Guinea

Sometime around 1890 English took a local wife, Tugura Sisira, with whom he had one son (Gilbert John). He later, in 1903, married Australian Daisy Skelly, and they had two daughters and one son (Marjorie, Gladys and Louis). There are descendants today in both his Papuan and Australian family.[8] As English got older, his and Daisy's elder daughter, Marjorie, gradually took over the supervising of plantation work and the family's trading posts (Sydney Morning Herald, 14.11.1938). With the arrival of war, in 1942, English was evacuated to Australia, and he died there three years later while he was preparing for his return home to Rigo. He was 82 when he passed away (Collinson, 1961, p. 591).

English's reports

Due to his sixteen years of Government service, Albert English's contributions in the *Annual Reports of British New Guinea* - both his district reports and from some of his longer patrols - open for an assessment over time, unique for this period in PNG's history. The duties of the BNG Magistrates and Government Agents were many and varied, and English's well-written reports allow us to follow his dealings, challenges and achievements. The establishing of governmental authority and control involved running and maintaining the station (buildings, roads, bridges and boats), making and keeping contact with local groups, organising patrols, leading the native constables[9], enforcing the laws and regulations that the government had introduced, keeping books and writing reports. The major challenge for the officers was to curb the local fighting tradition, and this was achieved by a combination of inspection visits, arrests of 'offenders', the appointment of Village Constables (VCs), and of establishing and maintaining good relations with the chiefs. Force was used at times, but in Rigo District relatively seldom. Disputes and offences were to be handled by the magistrate's courts instead of by the local tradition of divination and payback. Other officers tasks were ordering the planting of coconuts (for copra production), recruiting locals as carriers for patrols and for labour for work around the station, to end the practice of burials within the villages, and encouragement of 'good morals' and discouraging work on Sundays (these in understanding and co-operation with the missions).

The VCs were the officers' extended link to the communities. They overlooked their villages according to the instructions they received, and they visited the Station to report from their village and sometimes to bring in offenders. Their general good cooperation with English is evidence of the local peoples' adaption to the colonial reality they were facing. In Rigo District there were only a few cases where VCs had to be replaced for misbehaving or misusing their authority, and there were often many candidates when a new constable was to be appointed. In all his reports English comments on their loyal performance. In villages with no VC some of the same authority was given to chiefs. English wrote:

> *I cannot speak too highly of most of the village constables; they maintain good order in their villages, and take a pride in keeping their uniforms clean, and are a great assistance to me while travelling in their district. There are twelve chiefs in the district who receive pay and a uniform like those supplied to the village police.* (AR 1897-98, p.106)

By 1890, when English took over as Gov. Agent, many coastal parts of his district were already introduced to many of the measures mentioned above, and under his authority Rigo Station was soon regarded as being particularly successful in establishing peace and good relations. His then

[8] Information about English's family is partly supplied by his descendants. Some from a genealogy website (see lit. list).
[9] Each station had ten to fifteen Armed Native Constables under the officers' command, most importantly to take part in patrols. In addition to these, BNG had a centrally based force of around 20 constables under the direct command of the Commandant of the ANC, which was sent out to assist on demanding patrols throughout the colony.

Figure 5: *Kapa Kapa* (National Library of PNG, A7)

long service as Government Agent – sixteen years – contributed to relative stability and lasting good relations between the local communities and the colonial Government. The use of courts presided over by the officers was increasingly accepted and practiced. A particular long-lasting land dispute on Hood peninsula, between Hula and Babaka villagers, was referred to throughout the 1890s. In 1899 Governor Le Hunte reported that it was finally solved through English's local knowledge and authoritative handling of the case. Judge Winter had during other village court meetings observed English's mediating skills, and he later recalled:

> *In my humble opinion Mr. English, in my time, was the best 'natives' officer in British New Guinea. Other officers could make the natives fear and obey them, but they could not gain their confidence and good-will like Mr. English could. He did not lose his temper with natives. He had studied their superstitions, their customs, and their modes of thought. He was a good interpreter. He was not simply a mere mechanised translator. He made sure that a witness had clearly understood a question and that he, the interpreter had fully comprehended what the witness meant to convey by his answer, before he interpreted that answer to the Court.* (1906, quoted in Collinson, 1961, p.590)

Developments toward more peaceful relations – toward an ending of feuding and raiding - were for the most part welcomed among the tribes, but there was still much scepticism and uncertainty concerning the European presence and the Government's involvement in local matters. The peace – both inter-tribal and between the natives and the newcomers – was indeed fragile. As an example, following a local dispute in July 1893, a large force of 3-400 Aroma/Keakaro warriors gathered to fight a government party which was led by MacGregor and English. After negotiations with the leaders, it all ended with the successful establishment of Village Constables in the area and a few arrests. MacGregor regarded this event as a particularly successful handling of trouble and potential bloodshed, and English's local knowledge and connections were decisive for the outcome (AR 1893-94, p.9-11). Patrols in the inland were often of a first-contact character, and that is where uncertainties and fright sometimes led to violence (see more below).

Many of English's reports include comments on the local health situation, which was always a major concern for the government. The risk of epidemics in areas with European presence was recognised, and population declines caused by imported infections and diseases was feared. English reported on dysentery epidemics in his districts several times and on a serious whooping cough epidemic in 1900. He explained how these had unfortunate repercussions in the communities due to the local tradition of attributing sickness and death to sorcery. Epidemic fatalities were often followed by pay-back killings (i.e. AR 1900-01, p.39).

Another concern for the Government were the local burial practices, which in the Rigo District meant that the bodies were kept inside, and then after a short time just outside the houses, until one had established who was responsible for the death. The bodies were thus decomposing while kept openly right close to where every-day life was carried on. This custom is described in detail in English's report on Sinaugolo customs (see below). It was discouraged by ordering burial sites outside the villages, and by 1898 English regarded this practice as a thing of the past throughout the district.

While stressing the positive changes in his district, there were also developments which worried English, and especially the effect the new times had on the young men, and how this at times made it difficult to recruit local labour:

> *It is regrettable to see the numbers of fine, young, able men in the coast villages who sleep half the day and employ the other half with a looking glass and a comb admiring their person and dancing all night. While so employed, their wives are labouring in the heat of the sun in their gardens, and toiling under heavy burdens from the hills. So long as a native has plenty of food, there is no need for him to work for the foreigner for any lengthy period; all he wants is sufficient trade to purchase a wife, then he is quite independent. (…) In some of the coast villages it is almost impossible to obtain any labour, although high wages may be offered.* (AR 1897-98, p.105)

The practice around BNG for recruiting coastal carriers for high altitude patrols received critical comments by English. Men from his district, especially from the coastal villages, had already during the first years of the Government been recruited as carriers on inland expedition, even to the 4000-meter mountain tops in the Owen Stanley Range. Later, some were signed for work for gold prospectors in the mountain creeks of the Yodda field in the Northern Division. Coastal people did not handle mountain travel and temperatures well, however, so with several deaths occurring, English advised instead to recruit carriers from villages farther inland.

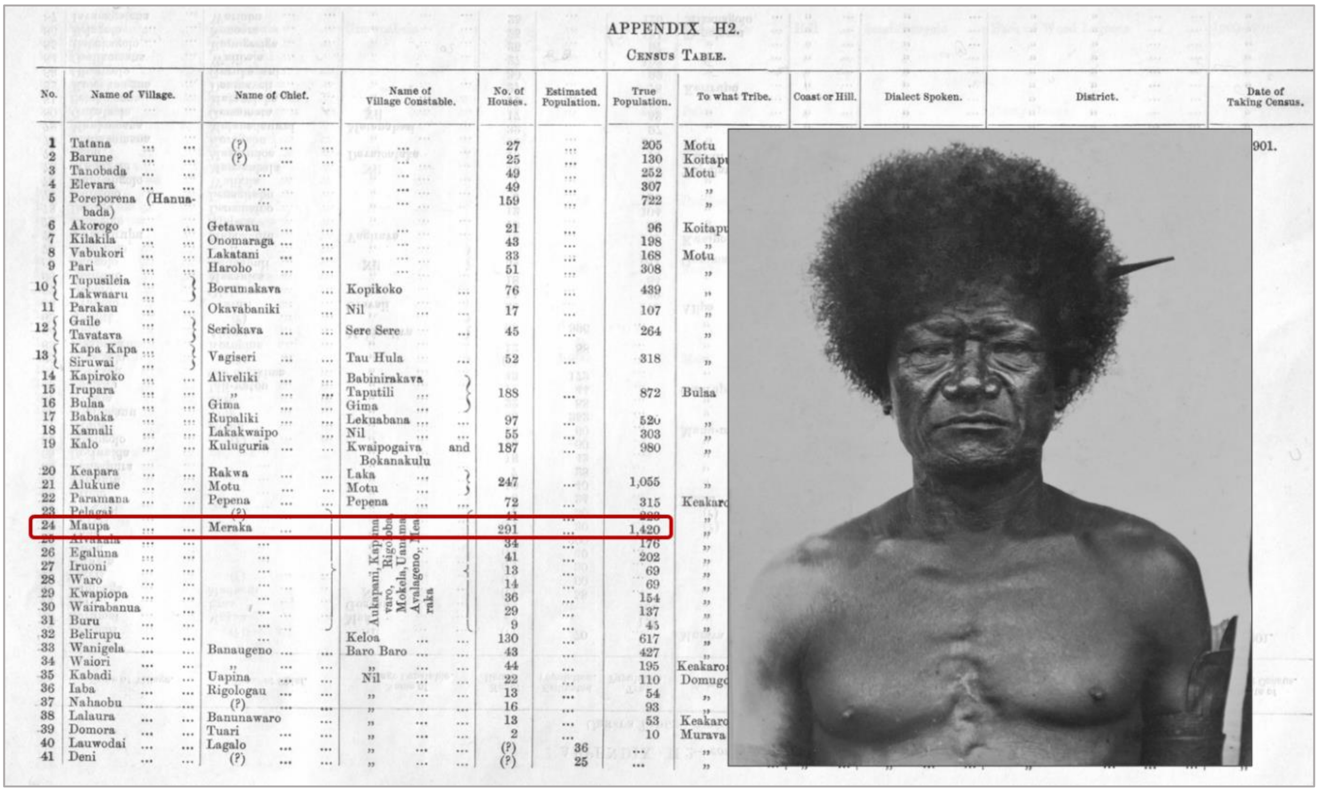
Chiefs

Administrators, as well as other expatriates, generally had problems with grasping the local chieftain systems. English agreed with the general colonial philosophy that it would be beneficial to have paramount chiefs in each group or village, rather than the spectre of clan leaders and sorcerers who continuously negotiated their positions, as was the tradition. His reports reflect how this preference influenced local matters:

> *The influence of the chiefs is daily growing stronger, and the villagers now begin to recognise that it is not the number of the chief's wives or his property that confers importance on him, but the power vested in him by the Government. The power and influence of the small chiefs has almost entirely died out, and but one man in each village is looked to as possessing authority there.* (AR 1892-93, p.53)

There would, of course, have been many local opinions about this matter, and of this type of outside interference.

In his reports English mentioned the names of many chiefs, sometimes with a short comment added, and it is clear that he treated them as supreme authorities in their clans or groups. In a census table written in 1901 (AR 1900-01, p.137-141) English listed the names of 212 villages in his



APPENDIX H2.

CENSUS TABLE.

No.	Name of Village.	Name of Chief.	Name of Village Constable.	No. of Houses.	Estimated Population.	True Population.	To what Tribe.	Coast or Hill.	Dialect Spoken.	District.	Date of Taking Census.
1	Tatana	(?)	...	27	...	205	Motu				901.
2	Barune	(?)	...	25	...	130	Koitapu				
3	Tanobada	...	...	49	...	252	Motu				
4	Elevara	...	...	49	...	307	„				
5	Poreporena (Hanuabada)	...	...	159	...	722	„				
6	Akorogo	Getawau	...	21	...	96	Koitapu				
7	Kilakila	Onomaraga	...	43	...	198	„				
8	Vabukori	Lakatani	...	33	...	168	Motu				
9	Pari	Harobo	...	51	...	308	„				
10	Tupusileia / Lakwaaru	Borumakava	Kopikoko	76	...	439	„				
11	Parakau	Okavabaniki	Nil	17	...	107	„				
12	Gaile / Tavatava	Seriokava	Sere Sere	45	...	264	„				
13	Kapa Kapa / Siruwai	Vagiseri	Tau Hula	52	...	318	„				
14	Kapiroko	Aliveliki	Babinirakava								
15	Irupara	„	Taputili	188	...	872	Bulaa				
16	Bulaa	Gima	Gima								
17	Babaka	Rupaliki	Lekuabana	97	...	520	„				
18	Kamali	Lakakwaipo	Nil	55	...	303	„				
19	Kalo	Kuluguria	Kwaipogaiva and Bokanakulu	187	...	980	„				
20	Keapara	Rakwa	Laka	247	...	1,055	„				
21	Alukune	Motu	Motu								
22	Paramana	Pepena	Pepena	72	...	315	Keakaro				
23	Pelagai	(?)	Aukapani, Kapanavaro, Rigoloba, Mokela, Uanama, Avalageno, Meraka	41	...	[illegible]	„				
24	Maupa	Meraka		291	...	1,420	„				
25	Aivakala	...		34	...	176	„				
26	Egaluna	...		41	...	202	„				
27	Iruoni	...		13	...	69	„				
28	Waro	...		14	...	69	„				
29	Kwapiopa	...		36	...	154	„				
30	Wairabanua	...		29	...	137	„				
31	Buru	...		9	...	45	„				
32	Belirupu	...	Keloa	130	...	617	„				
33	Wanigela	Banaugeno	Baro Baro	43	...	427	„				
34	Waiori	„	„	44	...	195	Keakaro				
35	Kabadi	Uapina	Nil	22	...	110	Domugo				
36	Iaba	Rigologau	„	13	...	54	„				
37	Nahaobu	(?)	„	16	...	93	„				
38	Lalaura	Banunawaro	„	13	...	53	Keakaro				
39	Domora	Tuari	„	2	...	10	Murava				
40	Lauwodai	Lagalo	„	(?)	36	...	„				
41	Deni	(?)	„	(?)	25	...	„				

Figure 6: First page of census table of 1901, with Chief Meraka (National Library of PNG, A42 (detail))

district, and there he also supplied the names of more than 150 chiefs - his local contact network was impressive. The table furthermore includes tribes' names, languages spoken, population numbers, number of houses, and names of village constables. No other officer produced a census overview of such detail at the time. On the table's first page (Figure 6) we find the largest village in English's district, Maupa (Maopa) at Aroma, with a population of 1420. The chief's name was Meraka, and he was one of the few people English photographed for which he wrote the name.

One chief, Kebokanamo of the Garia group, was a particularly important leader (Figure 7). He had a strong position in the Rigo district, far beyond his own village, and had also met with the British colonial leaders from the earliest days in the mid-1880s[10]. Through all English's officer years, Kebokanamo was his most valuable helper and assistant on patrols throughout the district, and his contribution was regarded so highly that he received an annual salary for several years[11]. English wrote admiringly about him in several of his reports:

> *The chief of Gosoru, Kebokanamo, has been of the greatest assistance to me in the execution of my duty, especially in the settling of the Garia tribes on their own land, and in the conveyance of messages to the mountains, being the most influential chief in the district and a great traveller. For his valuable services he has been receiving salary at the rate of £3 a year.* (AR 1890-91, p.82)

[10] In a photograph by J. Lindt, *The Chiefs of Garia & Saroa, on board S.S. Governor Blackall*, taken during Special Commissioner Sir Peter Scratchley's formal flag-hoisting visits along BNG's south coast in 1885, the chief seated at front right bears a striking likeness to Kebokanamo, and is likely to be him (State Library of Victoria, H42425/65). Three years later he was on Governor MacGregor's historic patrol to the highest peak in the Owen Stanley Range, Mount Victoria (it is not known if Kebokanamo was with the small group who reached the summit).

[11] Two other local BNG chief's names stand out with their assistance in the early colonial decades. These were Maino of Mowatta in the Western Division (Davida et.al. 2015) and Ahuia Ova in Port Moresby (Seligman, 1913, and Williams, 1939), who were both repeatedly hired as translators and patrol guides over several decades. Kebokanamo's employment, with an annual salary, still seems exceptional.

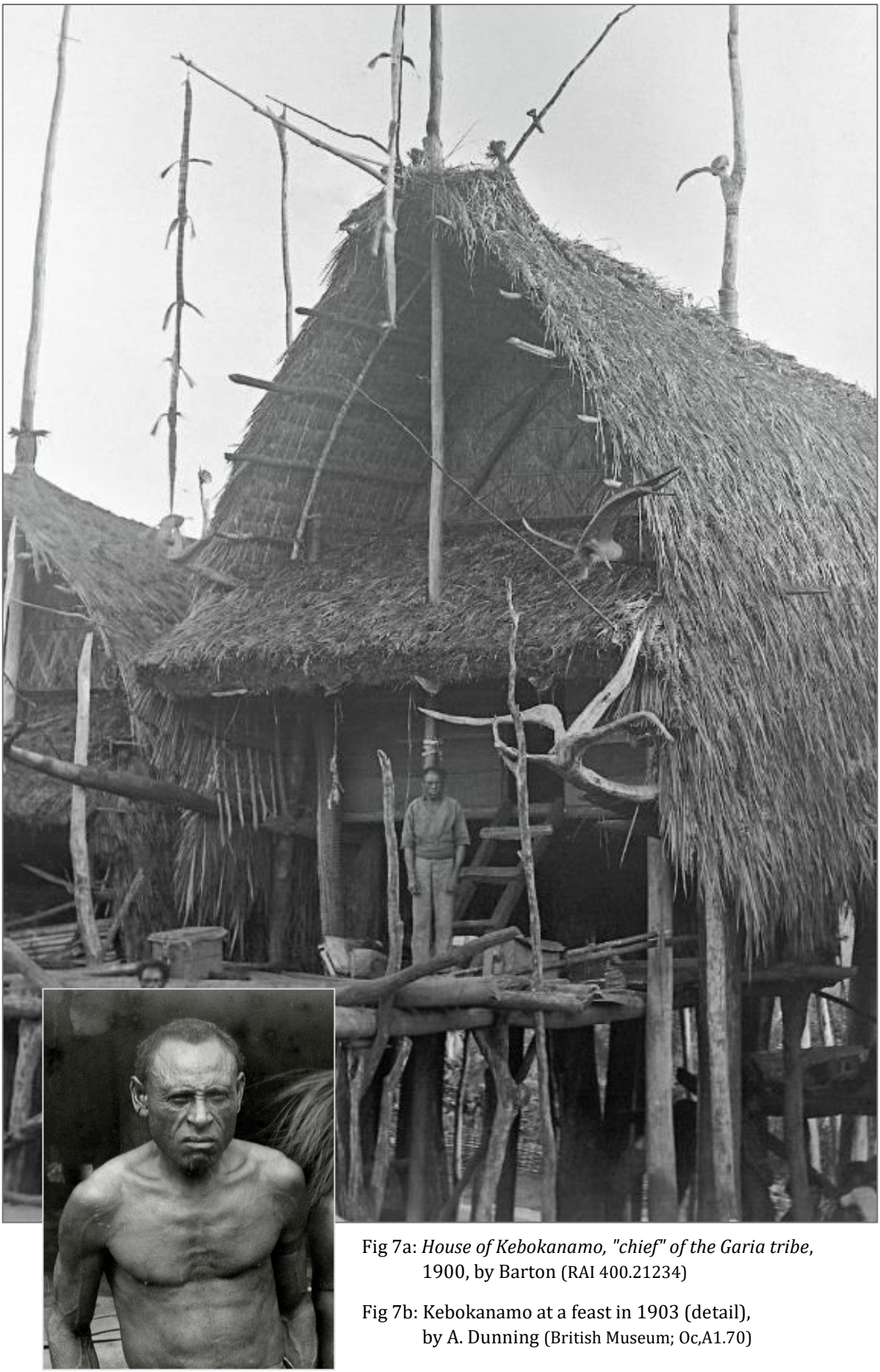


Fig 7a: *House of Kebokanamo, "chief" of the Garia tribe*, 1900, by Barton (RAI 400.21234)

Fig 7b: Kebokanamo at a feast in 1903 (detail), by A. Dunning (British Museum; Oc,A1.70)

> *The chief Kebokonamo, the native agent, has proved himself to be a most excellent man, being always ready to assist the Government in every way. I claim him to be one of the most influential chiefs of my district, and I know of no other native chief in the Possession that has half as much energy. He has built a very good rest house for visitors.* (AR 1896-97, p.60)

Other officers and visitors also commented on Kebokanamo's special qualities. Captain Barton, who, when Commandant of the ANC patrolled with English and Kebokanamo, was full of praise of the Garia chief:

> *Having an intelligent grasp of the objects and methods of the Government, he is in a position to convey to the native mind our ideas and intentions – always a most difficult matter to a white man, however well acquainted he may be with the language. Added to this he is a man whose influence was wide before he received his appointment under the Government.* (AR 1900-01, p.94)

Seligman furthermore mentions in a footnote that Kebokanamo's father was a celebrated war leader, and that it was believed that Keboka had inherited his father's magical powers (1910, p. 58-59).

Just as with Albert English's absence in PNG history articles and books, the by-passing of Kebokanamo is equally surprising. With his mediating skills and the high regard in which he was held in all camps, his contribution would have been essential for a reasonably smooth adaption to the changing times and have spared all parties from unnecessary violence and deaths. With the present focus on 'indigenous agency' in several disciplines one might hope for better recognition of Kebokanamo's role in the future.

Local inter-group relations

English patrolled extensively, between half and two thirds of the days in a year. From these patrols he reported not only on colonial relations and matters, but we also find information on local relations and purely local matters. Many patrols were general inspections, and some were to establish contact with inland groups who had not yet met with the newly-arrived and self-proclaimed authority. Trouble, violence, or raids between groups was sometimes the reason for setting out with constables and carriers. During his time, there was a clear increase in inter-tribal trading and feasting, which English was very pleased to point out in his reports. It was a sign that the pacifying efforts of the Government could lead to improved local relations. Already in 1891 English reported from the coastal Motu villages:

> *The Humeni tribes cultivate a very large quantity of food, and trading parties from the coast, Motu, Tupusileia, Gaile, and Kapa Kapa, frequently visit them. The latter tribes, only a few years ago, when travelling along the coast gave them a wide berth as they were one of the most murderous tribes in the district. (…) Tupuseleia, Gaile, Konebada, and Kapa Kapa are all very quiet, and are now cultivating a larger quantity of food, as they are able to go further inland without fear of the "bush'' tribes, the escorting of their women inland with spears is already a thing of the past.* (AR 1890-91, p.82)

By 1892, after peace settlement between Gabagaba and the Sinaugolo near Rigo Station, the latter held their first large feast in eight years, a feast which was meant to be annual. Governor MacGregor wrote that 'The Rigo District is now perfectly quiet and orderly' (AR 1891-92, p.22), and English reported in the following year:

> *The last year has been singular in the interchange or friendly visits between many tribes who have never met before. I may instance, for example, visits from Hood Bay and Galoma [Aroma], to those in my immediate vicinity, and vice versa. Galoma natives are constantly making trips up and down the coast, and the Mairu [Mailu] natives now visit Port Moresby.* (AR 1892-93, p53)

Ten years later feasts had grown larger, as with this example from Hula in 1904:

I estimated the display of yams to be quite 150 tons, with about 1,000 bunches of bananas. The number of people, including the visitors, that took part in the feast was about 1,800" (AR 1903-04, p.24)

The activity, energy, and spectacle of the local feast had a strong attraction on English, and he also saw that they had an important function in the new colonial setting. He was critical to administrators and missionaries who discouraged feasting and dancing, such as Reverend Pearse in his own district who wrote negatively about local traditions and "all their stupid ceremonies".[12] Particularly, the large annual feasts involved substantial preparations which English saw as important motivators for work, and since the men were less engaged in fighting, a decline in feasting would make them more idle, as mentioned above.

Figure 8: *Dance at Kapa Kapa* (detail; Australian Museum, AMS332/161)

Inland patrols

The patrols into the foothills, and sometimes to the watershed of the Owen Stanley Range, were both for contacting remote communities and for the general exploration of the colony. This called for more details in the reports, such as topographical information and observations on vegetation. Geological finds were of interest, and the hope for finding gold or other extractable minerals was always in the back of expeditioners' minds. Larger expeditions would have two or three officers in charge, and in some cases, this resulted in more than one report.

As mentioned, English took part in some of the Government patrols from the early years and then continued to assist on many of Governors MacGregor and Le Huntes's visits and explorations throughout the colony. His participation on the historic first coast-to-coast crossing of the mountain range in 1896 (AR 1896-97, p.4-14) was so successful that MacGregor brought English along on a second, similar crossing the following year (AR 1897-98, p.19-29). On the 1896

[12] Pearse Report in LMS var.j, 1896, quoted in D. Langmore (1989, p.111). LMS missionary Albert Pearse came to BNG in 1887 and was stationed at Kerepuna on the coast till his retirement in 1907.

expedition they passed across the top of Mount Victoria, and English was proud to have been one of only four Europeans to have stood on the highest peak in the colony[13].

As Government Agent at Rigo he then led numerous patrols himself into the rough country in the back of his district, and even to the villages just across the watershed behind Cloudy Bay. The Rigo patrols often had the combined aim to visit new villages, to maintain good relations with previously contacted villages, and to make arrests where this was regarded as necessary. While feuds and hostilities had cooled down decisively on the coast and near Rigo Station, these were more difficult to curb among the peoples of the valleys, hills, and mountains of the inland. Villages were scattered, often with considerable distances between, and often built on inaccessible hill- or ridge tops, with palisades and tree houses for defensive purposes. Fatal raids, sometimes with women and children among the killed, were happening throughout English's time in charge, which called for numerous patrols into the back.

The patrols didn't only bring the people of the hill villages in contact with the white colonisers, but also with other native groups who they had never met with before. The constables often came from far away – Kiwai Island in the Fly River delta was a favourite recruiting place during the first colonial decades – while English's carriers were mostly from near the station or Gabagaba. These new acquaintances were welcomed with curiosity in the hill and mountain villages, sometimes with scepticism and sometimes with enthusiasm. From an inland patrol in 1897 English reported that his carriers had danced with the Lakumi villagers through the evening, and the same thing took place farther inland in the village of Vegofi (AR 1897-98, p.117).

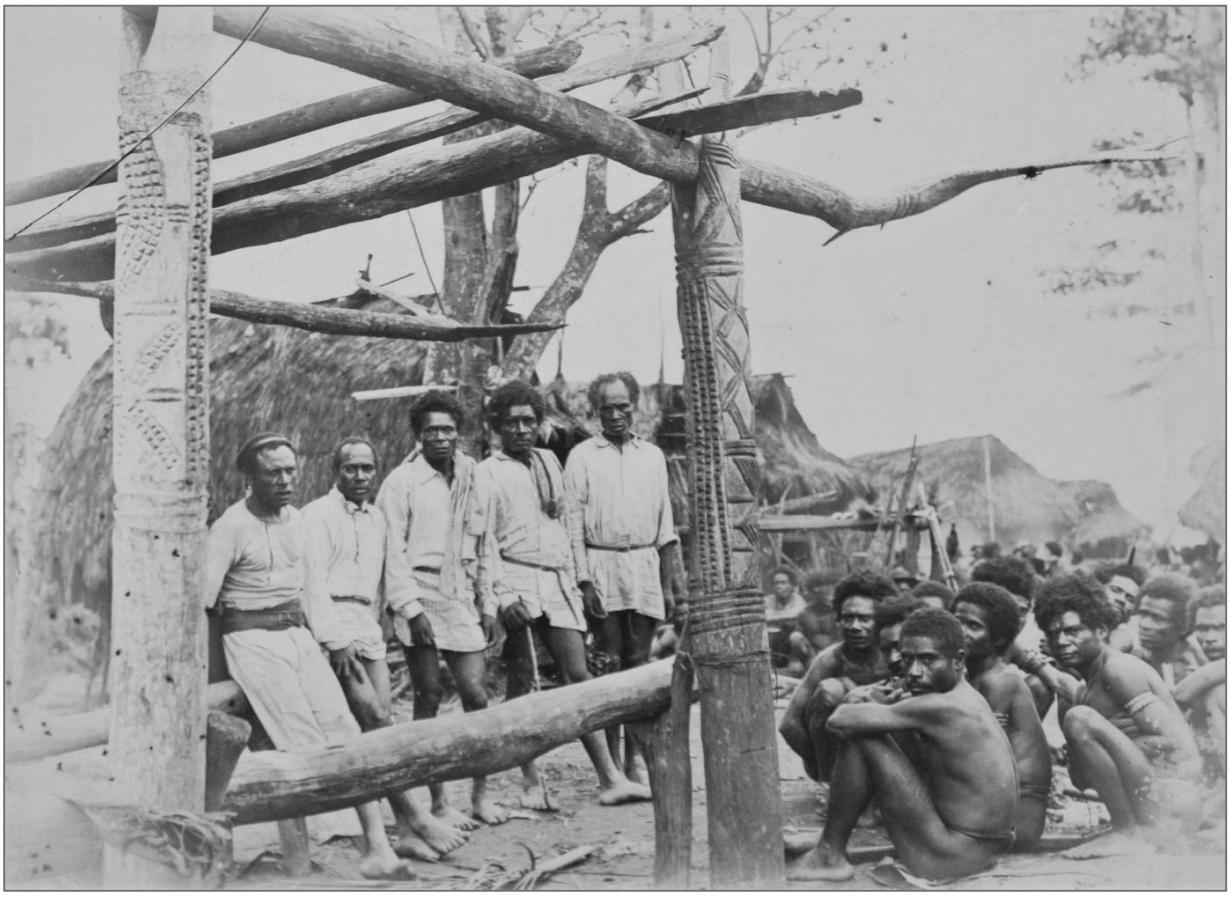


Figure 9: *"KEBOKANAMO" and 4 Chiefs on his left, Village of GANAI,* (National Library of PNG, A28)

[13] The other three were MacGregor and George Belford, who had been the first in 1888, and John Green who was with the Governor and English in 1896. There were, of course, several carriers and constables who also made it to the top.

To Demori, Memeka and Cloudy Bay

A patrol which well illustrates what can be read from English's reports is one that took place in August 1895 (AR 1895-96, p.35-38). This was to some villages at the very back of the Rigo district where there had been some inter-tribal unrest. On this patrol English also took several photographs, and the combination of textual and visual information give us a particularly good impression of the character and progress of the patrol and of the people involved.

Kebokanamo was assisting as usual and, as they approached the back, four chiefs from mountain villages they passed joined the patrol. These chiefs can be recognised in one of English's photographs (Figure 9) by the shirts they are wearing. Along with tobacco, a steel axe or knife, and printed cloth, this was a standard gift English brought when contacting new villages. Further back above of one of the tributaries to the Kemp Welsh River, at Demori village (see map p. 5), they met with the relatively young chief, Karagolo.

> *The chiefs of Kware, Vegopimaga, and Gania shook hands with the Demori chief, saying they had never met before, and that they had come with me to make peace. The chief (Karagolo) is a powerful man, with light skin, of about twenty-eight years of age; he is the best-looking man in his district.* (AR 1895-96, p.36).

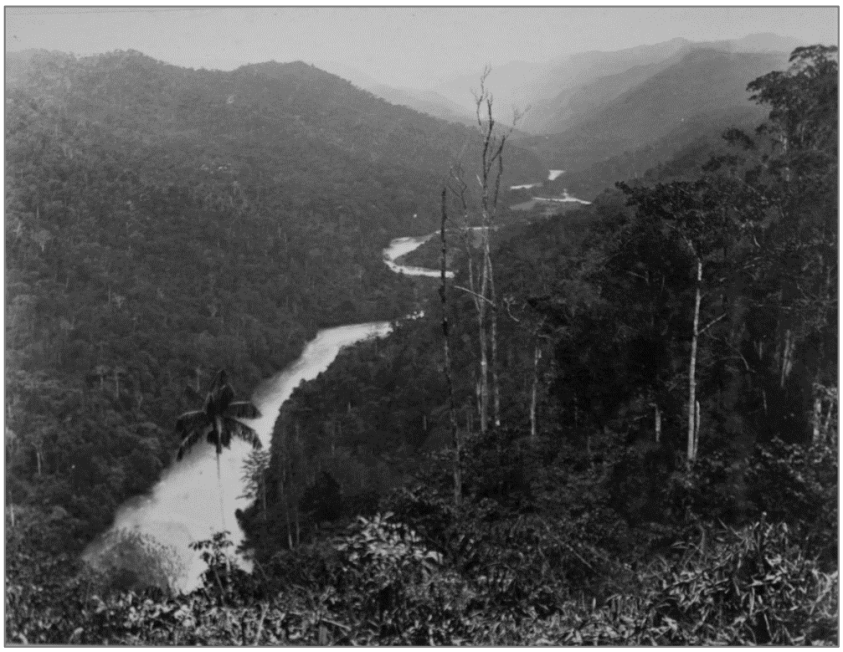
Karagolo explained that none of his people had seen white men before. English then made a demonstration of a rifle - a common practice among the officers on first contact meetings – which scared the villagers who took to the bush. Most returned next morning, however, and when the chief's family was assembled, English took a photograph of them (Figure 10), as well as a portrait of Karagolo (Figure 12). Gifts were then given, and good, although quite superficial, relations were established:

I gave the chief a tomahawk and 2 yards of turkey red. I also gave his mother a little salt, a knife, and some beads. I had the constabulary drilled in the village, and fired five rounds at a tree. I kept the chief in sight

Figure 10: Slides manuscript caption: *Chief and family of the Demori tribe. The man on the right is the Chief, sitting in front of him is his mother holding a bamboo pipe.* (National Library of PNG, B17)

during the afternoon. Before sundown a few more natives returned to the village, and danced all night for our benefit. Sunday, the 18th, we started from Demori at 8 a.m., the chief (Karagolo) accompanying me. (AR 1895-96, p.36-37)

The report gives a brief description of the village, the houses and tree-houses, and the reasons for their recent move to the very isolated location. A photograph of the view from the village adds to our understanding of the remoteness (Figure 11). Chief Karagolo's relation with the colonial government would be shifting in the following years, and by 1903 we know that he was serving a long prison sentence following raids which had caused several deaths. [14]



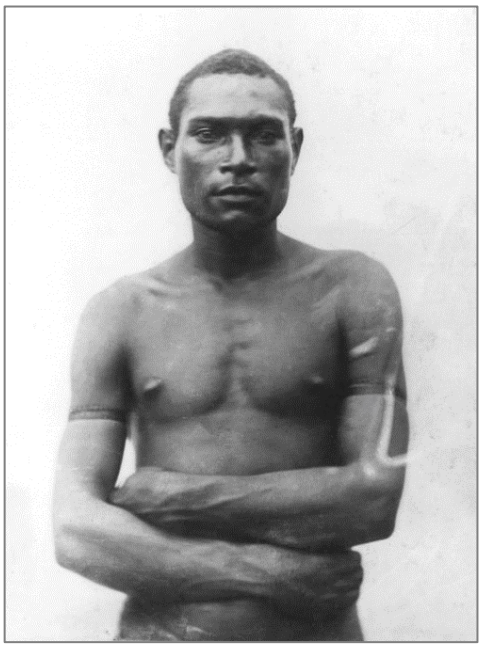


Figure 11 (left): *View looking up Kemp-Welch River from Demori.* (National Library of PNG, A60)
Figure 12 (right): *Chief at "DEMORI"* [Karagolo] (University of Queensland, 32948)

Other examples of patrols of importance were one to the Pyramid Hill area in 1900, and the several patrols across the watershed on the eastern fringe of Central Division to Keveri Valley. The former was well reported by both English and Captain Barton, who was then Commander of the ANC and joined the patrol along with a number of constables. This was one of the patrols where it came to fighting, which was reported in detail. Both officers took a few photographs. At the start of the patrol, Barton photographed Kebokanamo outside his very large house (Fig. 7a) then took one of English with villagers and carriers by the *dubu* at Kalikodobu village (Fig. 4), some of mountain villages, and one portrait of a village chief. English took one of Memeka village (see map) where the most serious fighting had occurred. It was taken from a tree-house. To this photograph English wrote a particularly detailed description in his slide manuscript (Fig. 13).

At Kevere Valley behind Cloudy Bay the people had a reputation for being particularly troublesome to both neighbours and the colonisers. English patrolled there in 1899 with Resident Magistrate Blayney, then in large patrols in 1900 and 1903 with Barton, and he also paid the district further visits. The officers' reports seen together give a vivid impression of the frequent fighting between the different groups along the watershed.[15] The reception they received in the different villages was described, and the officers took time to comment on the beautiful landscape. By 1903 gold prospectors had arrived in Keveri Valley, and despite the

[14] Further contact with Karagolo is mentioned in the reports of both English and other officers.
[15] Blayney's report in AR 1900-01, p.42-46; Barton's reports in AR 1900-01, p.88-89, and AR 1903-04, p.22.

Figure 13: Slides manuscript caption: *Village of Memeka, near Pyramid Hill. At the time this photo was taken the village had been surrounded by a Government party at early morning, the people having raided a neighbouring village and massacred 13 people. It is one of the roughest places ever entered by the photographer. It is built on a narrow ridge with a precipice on each side, and is a wall of stone. The photograph was taken from a tree house 40 feet above, the only suitable place to take it. Several of the natives were captured, but many of them escaped by sliding down the sides of the hill.* (Australian Museum, AMS332/346)

troubles between the different groups, and between the mountain groups and the Government, the miners got along well with the Keveri. English was very pleased with the relations between the miners and the local people:

> *I visited, as warden, all the miners' camps on the Keveri Valley and Domara gold-fields. The miners all got along first-rate with the local natives; they visited their camps and traded freely with them with native food. I saw some of them working in the claims. Messrs. Pryke Bros. were the first among the miners in that district, are held in high esteem by the natives.* (AR 1904-05, p.23)

Interestingly, one of the very few negative mentions of English which is known is in a letter miner Frank Pryke wrote to his brother in 1905. There he commented on one of English's arresting patrols, complaining about the large government parties staying and feeding on the villagers' gardens and making arbitrary arrests (Hank Nelson, 1978, p.82).

Understanding and not understanding

In several remarks in his reports English shows a concern, and an understanding of local matters which reaches beyond mere observation. This comment on the relation between feasts, working effort and food supply illustrates such a concern:

> *It is a well-established fact that when the natives look forward to holding these reunions, they cultivate far more food than they require for their own consumption, in order to be hospitable, and they therefore are able to pull through on the happening of a bad season. Instead of this custom being frowned at as it is in certain quarters, it should be encouraged, as it is productive of more good than evil.* (AR 1900-01, p.39)

English's understanding had, however, its limitations – he was still very much a new-comer on foreign ground. As with other officers, he never comments on how the local people looked at, understood, and wondered about the Europeans – the white men. There would have been many an evening lasting into the night in villages all over the colony, where the new arrivals were discussed: who were they; where did they come from; and what about their material wealth, and their powerful guns? Within the expatriate community most seem to have been happy with characterising villages or individuals as either friendly or hostile, and they came to hasty conclusions in numerous situations. While English showed much understanding of local circumstances and issues, this simplified categorising is found in his reports as well as in those of others.[16]

The cultural reports

A characteristic of pioneering British New Guinea was that several of the most central administrators and missionaries showed a genuine interest in local culture. While energetically engaged in their mission work or with the establishment of a colonial administration and European economic opportunities, they took ethnographic notes which were sometimes shared with scholars in Europe and sometimes published in reports, journals or as books.[17] All expatriates shared the belief that most of the colourful local traditions would be gone in just a few decades, and this gave additional motivation for observing and sharing what was seen and experienced.

Governor William MacGregor set an example for commenting on local cultures, as well as physical appearances, when new areas were contacted, and he also brought in objects for his substantial 'official' collection, meant to be representative for New Guinea[18]. In 1892 MacGregor encouraged his officers to make special reports on 'native habits and customs' for the major groups in their districts, since "..no man, or body of men, can rule justly and wisely a people with whose customs, usages, and inner life they are unacquainted", and he stressed that this was an administrative requirement, "not in the interest of scientific anthropology" (AR1892-93, p.xxiv). In the following Annual Reports five such reports were published[19]. The reports by Albert English (Sinaugolo), Bingham H. Hely (Western Division) and Charles Kowald (Mekeo District) roughly followed a set of headings which we can assume were given by MacGregor, while the other two were very short and superficial.[20] English wrote on the Sinaugolo tribe, the people near and in

[16] A discussion much based on post-war patrol reports, mostly from the PNG Highlands, is found in McPherson (ed), 2001. These chapters make an interesting comparison – for similarities, differences and attitudes - with the reports of Albert English and others which were written fifty-sixty years earlier and at a different colonial stage.

[17] LMS missionaries Lawes, Chalmers and Holmes were among those who wrote about the people and cultures in the areas where they practiced.

[18] The objects of MacGregor's collection were sent to Queensland Museum where it was agreed to have a New Guinea section. After Papua New Guinea's independence in 1975 a large part of the collection was repatriated to New Guinea where it makes up one of the foundations for the National Museum. It is described and commented by M. Quinnell (2000)

[19] Besides English's notes on the Sinaugolo, there were reports from Western Division (by B.A. Hely), Mekeo District (C. Kowald), Eastern Division (J.M. Hennesay), and the Louisiades (H.N. Chester). English's report was partly given in AR 1892-93, p. 65-67, and partly in AR1893-94, p. 65-69)

[20] Around thirty headings are used in the 'Native Habits and Customs' reports. They are tailored to suit New Guinean groups, and they differ somewhat from the headings in *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*. The *N&Q* editions of 1874 and 1892 had similar lists of around 75 topics in their customs and social section. MacGregor might well have been familiar with the first edition, and possibly even the second.

Figure 14: *Method of disposal of the dead by the Sinaugolo tribes.* (Private collection, Wendy Edmondson) Since none of the people are dressed in mourning, the photograph is clearly posed to describe this practice.

the hills behind Rigo Station, a total of seven very informative pages. Ethnographer Lamberto Loria, who had already spent some years in the colony and taken down numerous and detailed notes on several groups in BNG, was critical to these reports, of which he said the majority were collected in an amateurish fashion and without enthusiasm. He did, however, point out that English's report stood out above the others (Dimpflmeier & Puccini, 2018, p.72).[21]

English's description of the Sinaugolo include initiation traditions, social relations, house building, cooking, feasts and decorations, spirit beliefs and sorcery, all in a strictly descriptive style with no comments or attempts to explain the backgrounds of the practices. Death and burial practices (Figure 14), marriage customs, and hunting are described in greater detail. The full page on burials starts with the announcement of a death:

> *On the cry being raised that the patient is dead, the whole village assemble to his house, and show their affection for him by loud lamentations; the women scoring their faces with their fingernails, and the men beating their eyes and foreheads with closed hands. After a short time the defunct person is propped up in a sitting position in the house, against the principle upright support, and dressed in all his finery. A new perineal band is also put on him. When the body commences to swell it is removed to a platform (Kiro) outside, which has been prepared during the time the corpse has been lying within the house.* (AR 1894-95, p.67)

English has furthermore included two Sinaugolo stories, one about the origin of man and the other about origin of fire. His description of the women's tattooing practice is accompanied by illustrations of some local tattoo patterns. The tattooing was also presented in similar detail in the slide manuscript, accompanying the Fig. 15 photograph:

[21] Unfortunately, Lamberto Loria did not publish his notes. His was the most detailed ethnographic survey in New Guinea at the time (mid-1890s), and his notes have just recently been published (in Italian) by Dimpflmeier and Puccini (2019).

This scene depicts a mother tattooing her child, aged about 6 years. The material used is soot, which is obtained by burning india rubber and other gums and is made into ink. The designs are marked on with a pointed stick. A natural thorn is selected, and a small stick, the end being covered with fibre, is used as a mallet; the skin is punctured with the thorn, by being tapped with the mallet. A girl in these coastal tribes is thought little of as a wife unless she is well tattooed. The operation is a very painful one, as the eyelids, nose and lips are also tattooed, indeed every portion of the body. (Slide script, no.15)

Figure 15: *Tattooing at Kapakapa*
(Private collection, Wendy Edmondson)

The customs report represents an important ethnographic documentation, which is enhanced by the many photographs English took among the Sinaugolo and neighbouring groups, some, such as Fig. 14, clearly taken to support the description in the report. Clothing and decorations are not much commented in his texts, but these can be viewed in detail in the photographs. Village layouts, the many ways of decorating houses, the important ceremonial platforms - *dubus* (or *tabus*) - and the food displays during feasting times, neither of which are included in the report, are all well represented in his images. No photographs were, however, included in the reports, since the early AR's were without illustrations.[22]

These pages are also important because little else has been published on the Sinaugolo group. Seligman, after his two stays with English at Rigo, regarded the area as very important, partly because it was where the *dubu* platforms had originated, but the Sinaugolo and other Rigo groups were only mentioned in footnotes in his classic *Melanesians in British New Guinea* (Seligman, 1910). In 1915 Malinowski, who stayed with English for a week, filled seventy notebook pages with information on the Sinaugolo, but these were never worked into an article or other publication – yet an example of ethnographic work which has remained unpublished and inaccessible to most researchers.[23]

Besides this cultural report and the mentioned Census Table, the AR's of 1892-93, and 93-94 also include registrations of land tenure practices from seven different villages, where English has followed a 31-point questionnaire. This was again likely to have been supplied by MacGregor, and again English reported more than any other officer. The seven villages were Saroa and Kemaria (both Sinaugolo), Kamala at Hood Point, Maopa (these three in AR 1892-93, p.70-72); Manukoro east of Gaire, Kwaipo of Keapara, and Tubusereia (AR 1893-94, p.63-64). They give an interesting picture of likenesses and differences in the groups' relation to land, documentation which was important for the Government's approach to land issues, both in relation to intertribal feuds, to the settlement of planters and traders, and the establishment of government posts and stations. Information such as this has great present relevance in regard to local land issues.

[22] The AR of 1896-97 was the first to include illustrations. These were engravings based on photographs, while the AR of the following year had proper photographs, some of which were taken by English.
[23] Michael Young wrote of Malinowski's notes on the Sinaugolo, that beside mourning and burial customs, naming protocols, myths, spirit beliefs and the afterlife, and mortuary feasts, "he covered land tenure, gardening, hunting, forms of property, social organization, various systems of magic, courtship, betrothal, sex and marriage.' (2004, p.356)

English furthermore took down short vocabularies of two languages in his district which were published in the Annual Reports: Sinaugolo (AR 1890-91, p.142), and for the hill peoples behind Aroma (AR 1896-97, p.60).

The house and plantation at Barodobo

The English's home at Rigo was in time turned into a particularly attractive colonial estate which continued to be visited and to receive admiring comments from expatriates and other visitors. During his short stay at Barodobo in 1913, Malinowski was enchanted by the place, as reported in Michael Young's biography of the famous anthropologist:

> *Malinowski observed that the road was lined with coconut palms, frangipani and mimosas; lovely scents commingled with the stench of drying copra. There were hedges and arbors, as in a park, and fragrant white flowers that reminded him of Zenia's perfume. Having lived in the area for the last thirty years, English had transformed the landscape with his exotic plantings*. (M. Young, 2004, p.355)

Figure 16: *Barodobo,* in the 1890s (National Library of PNG, A12)

An even more lyrical description of the plantation and its surroundings is found in Colonel Mackay's *Across Papua* (Mackay was the leader of the 1906 Royal Commission), and he was also impressed when inside the house:

> *The view from the verandah was an ideal one for a planter's bungalow, stretching away over the cultivated areas to the local hills beyond. (…) The house was full of excellent local photography, and on the walls were displayed a collection of clubs and other native weapons, many of which money could not replace today.* (Mackay, 1909, p.31)

Importantly, Barodobo was from the very beginning a plantation with both private ambitions and official purposes.[24] It produced food for the colonial offices and the prison in Moresby, and it soon had the function of nursery and experimental plantation for the benefit of all planters in the colony. Since English spent more than half of the year on patrols, his assistant, District Warder Muhammed Ali, was for several years in charge of much of the work. English was very pleased with Ali's work and his book-keeping, calling him "a very capable and well-educated man."(AR 1903-04. p,21)

The development of the plantation, both its progress and its challenges, can be followed in the ARs. In 1893 English's entry read:

> *About six acres of scrub land has been cleared for the cultivation of bananas, yams, cocoanuts, &c. About 1,900 cocoanuts have been planted out and are doing well. A large number of orange, lime, mandarin, and about thirty other kinds of fruit trees, are doing well. The coffee, which was thriving so well, has been destroyed on account of the recent introduction of coffee-leaf disease on some plants imported in a wardian case.* (English, AR 1892-93, p. 54)

Figure 17: *Sisal Hemp, Kapa Kapa*, taken by E. Harris during the 1906 Royal Commission expedition. The man posing among the plants is probably Albert English. (from K. Mackay: *Across Papua)*

Two years later he could boast of more than 40 different plants, some with several varieties, thus adding up to around 70. These include citruses (oranges, mandarins and lemons), custard apples, guava, cacao, date palms, rice, grasses, cotton and many vegetables. Sisal was another cash crop which he planted with considerable success, and which became the starting point for a hemp industry in the colony. Local rubber varieties proved highly productive, with the *Ficus Rigo* also giving high quality rubber, picking up a good price on the market in London.[25] Kapok trees, from seeds imported from Java, also grew exceptionally well in the Rigo soils, yielding first-class textile fibres from their seed pods, and illustrating how English made use of many international contacts. Not all experiments with different plants were successful and it took time to get some accustomed to the climate. There were also downpours and droughts which damaged parts of the plantation at times.

After his retirement from government service, English concentrated on his plantation work. He continued to try out different varieties of crops and he shared the results of this both with other planters in Papua and with international institutions. In *The Papers of Albert English* at the NLA, we find some of his correspondence with the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington, where his experience with sisal hemp and bananas were discussed.

While contemporary officers and visitors recognised the importance of English's plantation, this has not been picked up by later writers. In D.C. Lewis' *The Plantation Dream* - a history of plantation enterprises in BNG/Papua - his few and incidental mentions of English is based on brief comments by other writers rather than the many details about the Rigo plantation found in English's reports. The importance of English's plantation work, for other planters and for the British-Australian colonial project, thus escaped the author.

Relations within the colonial community

During Albert English's first two decades in New Guinea the expatriate community remained small. The missionaries and administrators, and the few planters and naturalists all knew each other, or at least knew of each other. There were also Europeans who arrived for shorter or longer stays to try their luck with pearl and bêche-de-mer fishing, and gold miners found their way to Woodlark and the Louisiade Islands' promising digs via Samarai. After gold was found on

[25] Besides English's own crop statistics in the ARs, the rubber production was also reported in some detail in the report of the 1906 Royal Commission, with reference to English's work at Rigo (Mackay, 1909).

Figure 18: *Expedition to BUNI ABURA, led by Sir Francis Winter.* (National Library of PNG, A12)
A patrol setting out in April 1895 behind Marshall Lagoon. The four officers here all made several patrols with English: Chief Judicial Officer Francis Winter at right; Dr. Blayney at center, RM for Central Division at this time; in front Captain Butterworth, Commander of the ANC; and John Green at back. Green, when he in 1896 was Gov. Agent at Tamata Station, also took part in the coast-to-coast patrol where he, English and MacGregor crossed the summit of Mount Victoria. At Tamata he was later killed by Binandere tribesmen, an incident which would have repercussions in the colony for many years.

the Mambare River in 1895 more prospectors arrived, and they were soon the largest European group on mainland BNG. This resulted in a more troublesome relation to the local population (see Nelson, 1976). English had acquaintances in all camps.

In other officers' reports English received only positive comments, most importantly, as previously mentioned, from the Governors MacGregor and Le Hunte, but also from others whom he patrolled with on various occasions. Judge Winter, who led several ambitious patrols (and was also Acting Administrator when MacGregor was on leave), knew English from the earliest days; Dr. Blayney, when Resident Magistrate in Central Division, travelled with English on some patrols; and Captain Barton made several long patrols in English's company. All were much dependent on English's local knowledge and contacts for which they expressed their gratitude.

The overwhelmingly positive comments are balanced to some degree by short comments from visitors. Loria made a note in a letter of English being 'boastful'[26], and from Malinowski's visit many years later Michael Young wrote that 'English had a reputation of being crusty, and Strong[27] had advised Malinowski to humour him' (Young, 2004, p.355).

Of English's relation to the mission, we only get brief impressions in his reports, but he would have been well acquainted with Reverend Lawes. William Lawes was leader of LMS in BNG, and

[26] The letter was to Loria's professor in Italy. English assisted Loria on his first expedition; then their relation was strained for some time – for unknown reasons - before they returned to friendly terms again. (Dimpflmeier & Puccini, 2018, p.142)
[27] Dr. W.M. Strong was First Medical Officer in Papua, and when Malinowski visited, Strong had ten years of experience in the colony, including some ethnographic work, He was later appointed as Papua's first Government Anthropologist.

he had been the first European missionary in Papua. After twenty years in Port Moresby, in 1894, Lawes built an LMS collage and a large mission house at Vatorata, just a few miles from Rigo near the road towards Gabagaba on the coast. The well-run district and the good road to the coast would have been decisive for Lawes' choice of location. The few mentions of Lawes in English's reports are of the practical type, so the nature of their relation remains unknown. Of other missionaries, there are some brief mentions of Reverend Pearse in the reports. English knew him, since they lived and worked in the same district for twenty years, but, as mentioned above, some of English's comments on Pearse had a critical tone. They disagreed on the issue of traditional feasting, and Pearse was known not to communicate well with his congregation.[28]

Most of the mission work in Papua was carried out by South Sea Island teachers or evangelists, and gradually by teachers of native background. In English's reports some of them are awarded with his compliments and praise, while he criticised the methods and attitudes of others:

> *There is one thing to be regretted (…) the very aggressive way the teachers in the employ of the London Mission Society are dealing with the natives. I have repeatedly reported some of them to the head missionary of their district. (…) To deprive the natives of water and bathing on a Sunday is certainly not a Christian action. Enforcing of labour and fines on the natives because they failed to attend church had also to be noticed* (AR 1896-97, p.58-59).

Planters in New Guinea naturally shared interests with English, and his many experiments with different plants and crops would have been followed closely. Since these contacts were of a private, and not of an official kind, they are mentioned only in passing in the reports. From other sources we know that there was also competition and there could be envy[29].

There were a few miners prospecting the hills around the Kemp-Welch River headwaters behind Rigo as well. They had no luck with their search, but they all seem to have got along well with the inland villagers and English commented very favourably on some of them. On his inland patrols, English sometimes brought gear himself for a brief panning of rivers and creeks which had not yet been visited.

The prospect and hopes of finding gold were always a motivation for the New Guinea colonisers. When gold was found on the mainland – by MacGregor himself - and with Queensland with its recent gold rushes as nearest overseas neighbour, it was no surprise that prospectors soon found their way to BNG. The 1897 patrol across the mountain range with MacGregor and English set out partly to deal with troubles caused by careless prospectors. (AR 1897-98, p.9-19).

Albert English's photographs

The photographs of Albert English, most taken in the 1890s, are unique in several ways. It was when MacGregor asked his officers to make notes on local customs in their districts that English purchased a camera. This can explain why there is a strong emphasis on the local people and their traditions in his photo collection, rather than on colonial and family life. For the later decades, when he concentrated on plantation work, the number of images taken is sparse.

Besides his many landscape views, which were of administrative interest, his photographs show villages and houses, portraits and feasts. The photographs taken in mountain villages and their surroundings give viewers a good image of their rugged locations, and they were often captured with some of the villagers present. The ceremonial *dubus*, characteristic for the Rigo and Motu areas, were photographed both on festive and everyday occasions. Since the *dubus* are known to

[28] Pearse never learned the local language but communicated with his congregation through the interpretation of his South Sea Island teachers.
[29] There was, for example, a complaint in 1906 by a Mr George Graham about English's mixed role as a government officer and a planter (UC San Diego Library; *Rigo Station journals and other documents*: G91, Item 606B (reel 56).

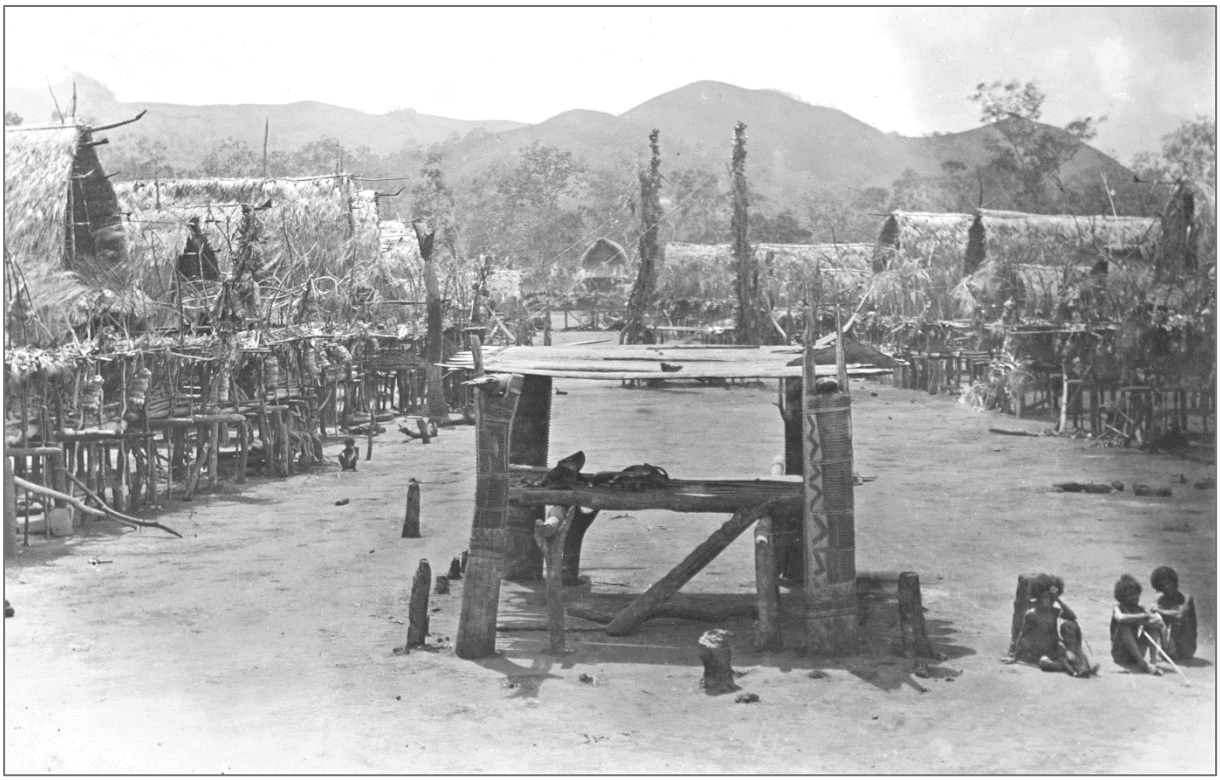


Figure 19: *IKORO village with "Dubu" in foreground* (National Library of PNG, A53)
A second *dubu,* which is decorated for a feast, can be seen in the back.

have originated in the Rigo inland, these images in English's collections have significant value.[30] In some photos dancers are seen by *dubus* adorned for feasts, stacked with masses of vegetable gifts, and in others, groups of initiates are posed on the platforms. An interesting observation which can be made from these photographs is of the carvings on the *dubu* posts. Carvings on coastal *dubus*, and those near the coast (Fig. 19) shown in photos by English and others, closely resemble those from far inland (see Figs. 4 & 9).

During feasts English often gathered dancers for a group portrait (Fig. 27a), while there are only a few captures of actual dancing (Figs. 1 & 12). His portraits are posed, sometimes following the tradition of using a blank background sheet or canvas, and some of which are the frontal-profile pairs in the anthropometric tradition. The photos taken of the people around Morehead River during his stay in Western Division in 1898 are the most typical in this respect, and we can assume that English's purpose here was to 'register' a group of people which hadn't been photographed before. Among the portraits only a few are named, such as the chiefs Meraka and Karagolo, and even for the expatriates appearing in the photographs, names are given for only a few.

The buildings and work around Rigo Station and Barodobo plantation were captured and there are a couple of pictures showing rubber trees. The importance of the road between Rigo and Gabagaba on the coast, which was built under English's supervision, is represented with a short series of images. This was the first BNG road outside Port Moresby and Samarai, and English was clearly proud of this achievement.

Photograph collections often mirror the nature of the photographers stays in New Guinea, were they missionaries, administrators or other. During the 1890s, the only photographer other than

[30] Seligman described the use of *dubus* among the Koita of Port Moresby in great detail (1913, p.60-65) where he also pointed to the platforms' greater importance in the Rigo district where they originated.

Figure 20: *Annual Festival at Keapara* (Australian Museum, AMS332/264)

English with a connection to the BNG government was Italian Amedeo Giulianetti[31]. This can explain why the two have similar types of landscape photographs – the visual registration of the colony's geography and topography - and they were also the first photographers to give us visual representations from interior mountain villages. English took one or a couple of photos at many inland villages where he visited or stayed, while Giulianetti produced a series of different types of subjects from the one village where he spent several weeks – both are sets of images which were important for a wider understanding of the colony and its people.[32]

While English's photography had a local focus, photographers with a more strictly ethnological agenda, like Loria and Wilkin[33], took several photos of craft activities, such as pottery and mat-making, subjects that are absent in English's collections. In contrast to English's many captures of feasting and dancing, missionary photographers, such as Lawes and Dauncey[34] typically took no, or almost no, feasting photographs.

The 1885 photographs of Johannes Lindt had a local focus, much like English's, but there are interesting differences in what they captured. Lindt, a professional photographer on an official mission to portray the colony, focussed mostly on village views, typically with some native people in the foreground. As a visitor making short stops along the coast, he did not get a chance to capture feast or ceremonies. His pictures have superior technical and compositional qualities

[31] Giulianetti came to BNG as a naturalist before he joined the government service. He spent many weeks in mountain regions and mountain villages in 1896 and 1897 (AR 1896-97, p. 68-69) His photographs are kept at Ethnographic Dept. of Museo delle Civilta, Rome.

[32] In AR 1897-98, MacGregor used some of both English and Giulianetti's photographs as illustrations.

[33] Anthony Wilkin had special responsibility for photography during the 1998 Torres Strait Expedition. Much of his photography was following the instructions of expedition leader Alfred Haddon and anthropologist Charles Seligman. The expedition photographs are kept at Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge and British Museum.

[34] Dauncy was the LMS missionary at Delena village on the coast northwest of Port Moresby, 1888-1928.

compared with English, but, again, the latter's many feasting and inland photographs added a new dimension to the BNG photographic archive.

From the Rigo district before 1900, Reginald Guise[35], who was a planter near Kalo (Hood Peninsula), took a small number of photographs, and Lamberto Loria took some during his stay. Then Reverend Lawes took a few, and so did Wilkin and a German naturalist named Emil Weiske[36]. These three were all just on brief visits, so their captures are of a more incidental character than English's. It was in his Rigo area that he captured many images of feast and feast preparations. Wilkins has a few dancing photos from Gumoridobo village, where he, together with Haddon and Seligman visited when they were English's guests at Barodobo.[37] Interestingly, when posing a group of dancers for a photograph, Wilkins and English set up their tripods next to each other, and had the shutters click at the same time, which resulted in the photographs seen in Fig. 21a and b.

Figure 21a *BABAKA Natives* (National Library of PNG, B21)

Figure 21b (left): *Dancers, Babaka,* by A. Wilkin (Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, N.51922).

Two photographers at Babaka, June 6th, 1898: In Wilkin's capture the group is looking to English's camera, but Wilkin also took one where they were facing his camera.

As with most colonial photographers, we do not know what prior experience English had with cameras or what relation he had to visual representations, such as illustrations and the photographs of others. His overall collections compare favourably with his contemporaries: English's pictures are generally quite sharp, and lighting is good, so he has mastered the camera well and we can be certain that he used a tripod. He has been conscious about catching what he wanted within the frame and his compositions are well balanced, although the placing of his subjects was generally quite traditional – not many surprising angles or approaches. English was not a great portrait photographer, since he, as most of the early PNG photographers, was influenced by the 'scientific' approach of portraying 'Others', which called for a distanced

[35] Reginald Guise was in New Guinea from 1883 to 1900 (see Nigel Oram, 1998). An album of his photographs is kept in the Anglican Mission's collection at the Michael Somare Library, University of PNG.

[36] Emil Weiske was a collector of birds, insects and other animals who stayed in BNG between 1897 to 1900. His photographs are kept in museums in Vienna, Berlin and Cologne.

[37] For the work, including the photography, of the Cambridge Torres Strait Expedition (which included a three month stay in British New Guinea) see A. Herle and S. Rouse (eds) (1998), and A. Herle and J. Philp (2020)

Figure 22: *Group of GAILE Natives* (PNG National Library, A52)
Slides manuscript caption: *"Gaba" or annual feast at Gaile. This takes place on the seas-shore, where a square is formed, and all the food hung up on poles; the erection is in the centre. The girls were grouped together for the photograph.*

accuracy of details rather than expression. On the other hand, many of his village and landscape images are indeed attractive.

His photographs can now be found in eight archives (plus one known collection still on private hands), but most have for various reasons, not been registered in his name till now.[38] English made several sets of prints from his negatives, for himself and for sharing with others, which can explain some of this confusion. A couple of his photographs have, for this reason, been published but without English's name or his captions. His visually attractive depiction of feasting girls and women at Gaire village, taken during their big annual feast has, for instance, been published in several books and articles with various attributions, some quite incorrect (Figure 22).[39] This is one of English's photographs where a comment in his slide manuscript adds interest, in that it not only gives us the location and occasion, but also mentions how he directed the girls and women to create an attractive pyramid-like composition. While the writing of cultural reports inspired English to take photographs, we also see, as here, how he sometimes had aesthetic ambitions. We sense that a mix of motives were at play: salvage, personal memory, and a wish to take pleasing pictures, and maybe he had possible presentations, such as the one he gave in 1904, in mind when he brought his camera to villages and on his patrols.

The most complete collection of Albert English's photographs is kept at Australian Museum in Sydney, consisting of three albums with 244 prints which have just recently been acknowledged as English's. They were donated to the museum by a relative of a planter, Richard Walshe, together with four of this planter's own albums, and were all registered in his name. The three Australian Museum albums have for this reason not been recognised as English's. Walshe was in Papua between 1913 and 1925 and his plantation was close to Barodobo. How he came to possess the three English albums is not known, and the donor was not aware of their origin.

Two similar albums, with 140 prints, have found their way to the National Library of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, and a set of 116 prints are kept at the Michael Somare Library of the University of PNG. English's photographs at the University of Sydney are in the Macleay Collection of the Chow Chak Wing Museum (47 prints). These are copy prints from an album owned by a Mr Jim Smith, and they additionally have a few of English's landscape photos in their Geology Department's collection. The origin of the 44 prints at the University of Queensland – kept at their Anthropology Museum - is not registered. Together with a few of the Macleay Collection photographs, and the five at British Museum, the University of Queensland collection is the only one which today has online access. A set of around 25 English prints have, furthermore, through unknown paths reached the Peabody Museum at Harvard.

The British Museum prints were taken by Charles Seligman when he, as part of the Cambridge University Torres Strait Expedition stayed with English in 1898. Seligman photographed the prints he found nailed to English's wall at Barodobo. The nails can be clearly seen in the British Museum photographs.

The private collection mentioned here is a set of 62 prints that were owned by New Zealander James Taylor Hancock, who was a doctor at Samarai for two years at the beginning of the 20th century. He had possibly received the photographs from English personally, as one of several who English gave or shared photographs with. These prints were recently found among the belongings of a Hancock family member who had passed away and they are now kept by one of

[38] Due to the spread and poorly recorded provenance of English's photograph, they were not included in Max Quanchi's impressive presentation and discussion in *Photographing Papua* (2007), or in other publications about historical Papua New Guinea photography.

[39] Only in Jude Philp's article (2015), where she uses this image in a discussion about photographs and museum artefacts, is English credited as photographer.

Hancock's relatives.[40] Hancock's set is a good example of how historical PNG photographs still appear from attics and closets at surprising locations.

The lantern slide manuscript mentioned above, together with the many prints which include English's captions, has made it possible to verify the mentioned collections as English's. Some of the slide script captions are brief, but some are like a full paragraph (as in Fig. 13). The photos mentioned in the script can all be dated before 1904, and many can be dated more exactly when matched with the reports, some with exact dates, even the time of day. Due to the common sharing of photographs among expatriates, there are a couple in the English collections which were possibly taken by others.

Collected artefacts

In addition to English's reports and photographs, the objects he collected are important contributions to our knowledge of PNG's traditional customs and material culture. He had gathered a significant collection of clubs, axes and adzes from Central, Northern (Oro), Delta and Western Divisions. When Malinowski visited for a week in 1913, he made notes in his diary of English's interest in both plants and in traditional artefacts (Fig.23). Malinowski was greatly impressed by his hosts collection of clubs and realised its importance. He then helped English with classifying the clubs[41]. A detailed cataloguing, archived at Australian Museum, of 106 clubs from English's collection is likely to be the one he wrote together with Malinowski. In the introduction to this list they mention that:

> *None of the undermentioned specimens have been made to order, or for trade with the white man, and have all previously been in use prior to their acquisition by the collector. They have all been made spontaneously by the natives for their own use.* (English/Malinowski, 1915)

The listing also gives a £ value for each club, where pineapple clubs are (at £20) regarded as three to six times more valuable than other clubs (Fig. 24). In 1916 English sold his club and artefact collection to South Australian Museum, where they are still attractively displayed as they were arranged around 1920 (Fig. 25).[42]

Location is given for all the clubs, and materials, shapes and decorations are described in the listing. Around half of the clubs are from the Rigo District. Some of the clubs and other artefacts,

Figure 23: *Curios at "Barodobo" house* (Australian Museum, AMS332/322).

[40] Personal correspondence with Mrs. Wendy Edmondson
[41] Young, 2004, p.355
[42] At SAM they have registered 192 objects as English's, and these include other objects besides the clubs.

94.	Irregular star of thirteen points,(One knocked off) long flanges; white quartz; usual setting.	Mt Bride.	£8.
95.	Irregular pineapple, two rows, used and worn down in unfinished stage; outer wedge setting; white quartz.	"	£3
96.	Pineapple club white quartz; three rows pyramids; exceptionally fine specimen; matwork mounting kept from slipping by string of human hair wound round shaft; split wedge setting.	Chasa River	£20

Figure 24: *Example from English and Malinowski's club cataloguing* (Australian Museum).

as most of the 20 clubs from Oro Province, would have been collected by English when he was patrolling with MacGregor in 1896 and 1897 across the Owen Stanley Range. Some seem to be

from areas that he had not (to my knowledge) visited personally, but where he might have been given or exchanged the clubs with other collectors.

While other parts of the PNG collections at South Australian Museum have been analysed and commented, the Albert English collection still awaits attention.

Figure 25: Display of Central and Northern Division clubs and shields at South Australian Museum (Jan H.)

Conclusion

Albert English's contributions in the Annual Reports over a sixteen-year period give us a special opportunity to follow colonial and relational developments of the first decades of the British colony in New Guinea, and with his many photographs this is given visual support in a unique manner. And this through the words and camera lens of an officer who was involved in so many colonial activities: exploring, planting, governing and collecting. As shown here, this material shed light on the establishment of colonial control British New Guinea, and the role English played in this process: we get insight into the work around Rigo Station and with the officer's inspection duties; we are given vivid descriptions of the challenges patrolling officers were faced with when contacting new areas and when trying to stop feuding and raiding; we can follow developments of his plantation; we are supplied with information on the district's inter-tribal relations at the time of colonisation; and we are given examples of how contact with the Government influenced settlement changes and traditional life in general.

It was decisive for the development of the colony of BNG that Rigo district, right east of Port Moresby, was well-run and relatively peaceful through English's sixteen years of service. This was partly achieved by his respectful ways of dealing with local leaders and villagers, and his cooperation with Kebokanamo and other chiefs show that he had greater faith in the abilities of the Papuans than many of his fellow officers had. Incidents of violence and fighting took place during the colonisation of British New Guinea, as shown here also in the Rigo inland, but compared with European colonisation on other continents during the same decades, as in Africa and Australia, such events were in BNG relatively rare and on a smaller scale. This can partly be explained by the attitudes of administrators like MacGregor and English, whose ideas of fairness included the local people and who showed interest and concern for them.

English was a coloniser, of course, he believed in European take-over of far-away lands and that this was fair and right. The material imbalance between the colonisers and the local people hangs as an uncommented shadow over English's activities and accomplishments as it does with the entire colonial project. Within that frame, however, his good understanding of the local people and his mediating talents contributed to keeping friction at a low level.

The good order and reasonably predictable relations between the local people and the expatriates in Rigo District were furthermore beneficial for researchers and other visitors who, when spending time with English at Barodobo, visited the nearby villages where they took notes and photographed. With his assistance and great local knowledge, English aided anthropological researchers in particular. When the LMS decided to locate their collage at Vatorata, by the road between Rigo and Gabagaba, they also profited directly from English's work.

The reports and photographs by Albert English are among the missing pieces in present discussions, narratives and research about PNG history, and they need to be incorporated into our understanding of the first decades of colonial New Guinea. His role and accomplishments were significant, and his reports, as well as giving historical information, reveal both his and the colonial administration's level of understanding the local people and of the colonial project in general. For anthropology, English's *Native Customs Report*, although not extensive, could be seen together with Malinowski's unpublished notes on the Sinaugolo. They represent the earliest gatherings of information for the concerned groups and are thus of both historical and anthropological relevance.

Of English's photographs only a very small number have been published or otherwise used. Since most have, till now, not been registered English's name, they have escaped attention. English's photographs were the first taken in many villages and districts, so they have,

potentially, particular value when repatriated to the communities where they were taken.[43] The mass of local information in his reports is also, despite their relative accessibility, poorly known locally, so dissemination is an important issue to address further. The census and land tenure information gathered by English are striking examples of information with great local relevance today.

From the cross-referencing of image captions from various albums with the lantern slide manuscript and with information from his reports, provenance of an important set of photographs has been established, and the photographs have in return given visual support to English's many reports from around the Rigo District and elsewhere.

For work on the history of the coast and inland of Rigo district and the back of Cloudy Bay, English's many patrol reports are essential, and here I have only given space to short glimpses. There are also the Rigo Station Correspondence and Reports to investigate – these have only been partly included here. The reports and writings of the LMS missionaries in the district could add more information, and from another angle[44]. Most importantly, a linking of English's material with local oral history would harvest gains for local history and identity, and would strengthen our knowledge and understanding of PNG's cultural and colonial history.

I hope this article will inspire more work on the under-utilised sources of PNG history and anthropology.

Figure 26:
Albert and Daisy English with their children Marjorie, Gladys and Louis, ca 1920
(courtesy of Mrs. Rhonda Jane Soerge)

[43] Some photographs have recently, and are presently, being exchanged in Facebook groups. The response is always great, and often from people with connection to the villages shown in the photographs. Although PNG users of social media has grown rapidly through the last decade, one need to remember that information there still reaches only a segment of the local population.

[44] Station reports can be ordered from the Tuzin Archive for Melanesian Anthropology: https://library.ucsd.edu/research-and-collections/collections/notable-collections/melanesian-studies/papua-new-guinea-patrol-reports/files-of-correspondence-journals-and-patrol-reports-from-outstations-of-british.html.
London Missionary Society reports and correspondence are kept at the SOAS library, University of London: https://www.soas.ac.uk/library/archives/collections/missionary-collections/#CouncilforWorldMissionincorporatingtheLondonMissionarySociety

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Note on photographs:

Photographs have been published here with the consent of the keepers.

As part of my work with Albert English's photographs I have put together an overview of these which give reference to where they were taken, where they are kept, and how they have been captioned. This overview can be accessed through the archives that keep his photographs, or by contacting me (janhass@online.no).

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